



Teacher Dismissal Process at a Glance

1. What is the deadline for submitting teachers to File Review?

This year's deadline is February 10, 2012.

2. How do I submit teachers to File Review?

Principals should submit the online recommendation form using HISD's [upload tool](#). The form will be made available to principals via email (See [Appendix A](#) for more information.) SIOs will review the files for each teacher submitted with principals at staff review to confirm that they will move forward to File Review.

3. What should I bring to my File Review meeting?

Three (3) copies of a complete set of each employee's file should be reproduced, placed in a legal folder, and labeled. See [Minimum File Requirements](#) for more information.

4. When are File Review meetings?

File Review meetings will be scheduled between February 13 and the end of March. While additional File Review meetings can be scheduled at any time, the bulk of File Reviews will occur according to the calendar below.

Teacher Dismissal Process Calendar

Date	Event
February 10	Deadline for submitting online Recommendation Forms for File Review
February 13	File Review Meetings begin
March 23	File Review concludes for probationary and term contract teachers
April 5	Final board meeting to review File Review recommendations
April 16	Deadline for district notification to probationary and term teachers regarding non-renewal
April 16	File Review meetings resume for continuing contract teachers, if needed

- Legal Services will work with SIOs to schedule File Review meetings.
- File Review meetings for Apollo 20 schools will be held during the first week of File Review.
- SIOs and Legal Services will work to schedule File Reviews after each school's staff review meeting. This may not be possible in some cases.

Overview

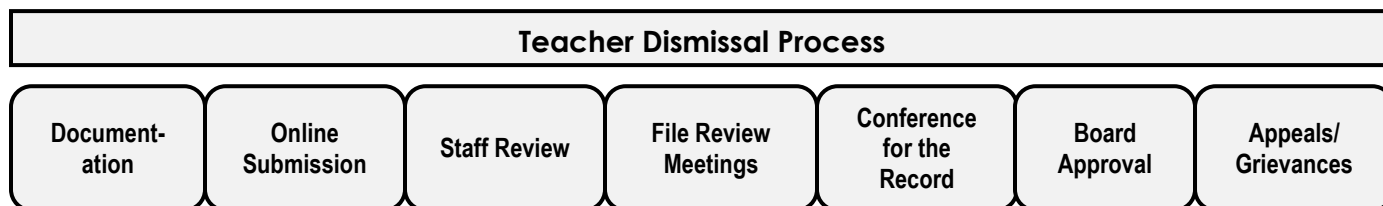
The purpose of this document is to provide principals with an overview of the Teacher Dismissal Process in spring 2012 and highlight key changes and action steps. In an effort to streamline processes and ensure more consistency throughout the Teacher Dismissal Process, the district has made several changes that will clarify expectations at each phase and increase the use of data and technology for tracking cases.

Below is the process by which the district makes decisions about individual teachers who have been recommended for termination, non-renewal or an extension of probationary status. The District is required to give written notice to teachers if the district intends to:

1. Terminate or non-renew a teacher's employment at the end of the school year, or
2. Extend the probationary period to a fourth year.

Term and probationary contract teachers must be notified of such decisions by April 16, 2012 according to Texas Education Agency code. The following activities must be conducted in order to meet that deadline.

Steps in the Process



1. Documentation

Principals should compile all documentation related to the teacher he or she wishes submit for action. Please see the section [Expectations and Best Practices for Documentation](#) for guidance on documentation and documentation samples in the Appendix.

- **Principal Action Step:** Compile documentation for each teacher who will be submitted for action.

2. Online Submission*

Principals will submit teachers to be brought to File Review via an online submission form. The online form will be made available via email to principals.

- **Principal Action Step:** Submit teachers to be brought to File Review via online form **by February 10, 2012.**

*See Online Submission Form for more explanation of this step.

3. Staff Review**

Principals should be prepared to discuss the teachers they have recommended for non-renewal, termination or fourth-year probation with their SIO during staff review meetings. Principals and SIOs will discuss the expectations and best practices for documentation as well as the rationale for each recommendation.

- **Principal Action Step:** Prepare to discuss teacher files at Staff Review **(February 13 – March 2, 2012).**

**See the section [Expectations and Best Practices for Documentation](#) for guidance on files.

4. File Review Meetings

Upon receipt of the list of teachers to be brought to File Review, Legal Services will work with SIOs to schedule File Review meetings. During these meetings, principals, SIOs, Employee Relations, and Legal Services will convene to discuss each case that was submitted for recommendation electronically. Meetings will follow a standard agenda. Due to the volume of cases, principals may not bring additional files (those not previously submitted electronically) or files for counsel only. Each attorney will track the File Review meeting recommendations and rationale.

- **Principal Action Step:** Bring documentation related to each teacher and ensure that each individual file meets the minimum requirements set forth below Schedule time with Legal Services after spring File Review for files for which you seek counsel only.

5. Conference for the Record

If a recommendation for action is approved in File Review meetings, principals should schedule conferences for the record with employees, giving them two business days' notice.

Following the conference for the record, principals should scan and submit the following required documents to

employeerelations@houstonisd.org:

1. Invitation to conference for the record;
2. Summary of conference for the record, signed and dated by the teacher; and
3. Recommendation for termination.

Principals should hold original versions on the campus pending TEA appeals, grievances and disputes.

- **Principal Action Step:** Scan and submit all required documents to employeerelations@houstonisd.org by the deadline set by Employee Relations. Given the volume of cases, submitting final requirements after the deadline will preclude the recommendation from consideration by the Board. Faxes will not be accepted.

6. Board Recommendation

The Board will consider recommendations and make proposed actions. In order to notify employees of proposed actions by the statutory deadline of April 16, 2012, the Board will review recommendations on a rolling basis in March and April meeting agendas. Approved Board agendas will be posted to the HR portal, and Employee Relations will contact principals as necessary following the Board meetings.

7. Appeals and Grievances

In cases where teachers submit appeals or grievances, principals will appear as witnesses in hearings and/or before the Board. Principals will be contacted by the attorney representing HISD. For more information about preparing for testimony, please see the Thompson and Horton HISD Administrator Training binder, pp. D-2 - D-8.

What Gets "Reviewed" at File Review?

Each case is unique, and thus each File Review discussion will be unique. However, principals can prepare for the following topics and items to be addressed:

- ✓ Confirmation of the teacher's contract type
- ✓ Rationale for submission and key performance issues
- ✓ Events leading up to the submission for termination, non-renewal or probation
- ✓ Documentation of evidence
- ✓ Additional contextual information that may be important to the case
- ✓ Attorney recommendations and rationale for the recommendations
- ✓ Next steps based on recommendations

Expectations and Best Practices for Documentation

Minimum File Requirements

- Three (3) copies of a complete set of each employee's file should be reproduced, placed in a file folder, and labeled. These should be brought to the File Review meeting.
- Documents should be arranged in chronological order.
- All documents relating to the employee must be included in the file, not just those documents that the supervisor feels supports his/her position.

Documentation Best Practices

Thorough documentation is a key factor in the success of the Teacher Dismissal Process. What follows are best practices for the compilation of existing documentation to ensure that comprehensive information is considered at all steps in the process.

File Contents

- **Chronological Summary.** Strong files include an overview of key events and communications related to the teacher's performance issues at the beginning of the file.
- **Evidence of Performance Issues.** Evidence of the performance issue identified by the principal should be present and included in the file. Evidence could take the following forms:
 - Observation and walkthrough forms,
 - Progress conference forms,
 - Student performance data, and
 - Previous evaluations (in instances where performance issues have been present for multiple years).
- **Evidence of Development and Remediation Efforts.** Documentation should show that the principal, appraiser and others supporting the teacher have made a good faith effort to help the teacher improve. Evidence could take the following forms:
 - Prescriptive Plans for Assistance (PPA) that show efforts made over time to help the teacher improve,
 - Appraiser observations and feedback forms that provide specific action steps for the teacher to improve,
 - Teacher Development Specialist observations and feedback notes, and
 - Communications between the teacher and appraiser, principal or TDS concerning specific action steps the teacher should take to improve (emails, memos, etc.).
- **All Communication about Performance Issues with the Teacher.** Files should include any communication that has taken place between the principal and/or appraiser and the teacher about performance issues. This includes any communication from the teacher to the principal or appraiser. Communication can be in the form of memos or emails.
- **Comprehensive Teacher Information.** The file should provide a comprehensive set of information around all issues concerning the teacher. These issues can also be identified on the chronological summary, and any existing documentation should be included.

Characteristics of Strong Evidence

- **Teacher Signatures:** Wherever possible, the teacher has signed documents to indicate that they have been received and reviewed. This can apply to PPAs, observation and walk-through notes, and memorandums regarding the teacher's performance.
- **Evidence from Multiple Parties:** Strong evidence illustrates that the performance issues have been observed by multiple parties, which can include TDSs, appraisers (when not the principal), SIOs, and other school-based administrators.

Additional Guidance

Please also refer to the Thompson and Horton HISD Administrator Training materials for more documentation guidance. Specifically, refer to the following sections:

- Examples of types of documentation, p. B-2
- Preparation of documentation in response to misconduct or performance issues, p. B-2
- Guidelines for writing, p. B-4